



CITY OF BURLINGAME PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item: 7a	Hearing Date: July 13, 2026
Project No.	DSR26-0014
Location	1454 Balboa Avenue APN: 029-013-320
Applicant and Designer	James Chu, Chu Design & Associates Inc.
Property Owner	1454 Balboa LLC
Staff	Brittany Xiao, Associate Planner
General Plan Designation	Low Density Residential
Zoning	R-1 (Low Density Residential)
Lot Area	7,001 SF

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Review of an application for Major Design Review to construct a 3,254 square-foot, two-story single-unit dwelling with detached garage on a 7,001 square-foot site in the R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning district.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Planning Commission, by resolution, approve the Major Design Review application as conditioned.

BACKGROUND

The project site is an interior lot and currently contains an existing one-story single-unit dwelling with detached garage and a shed. The applicant proposes to demolish the existing structures and construct a 3,254 square-foot, two-story, single-unit dwelling with detached garage. The project requires a Major Design Review application reviewed by the Planning Commission (BMC Section 25.68.020.C.1.a.).

A 346 square-foot detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) will be constructed in the rear of the lot attached to the proposed garage. A 457 square-foot attached junior accessory dwelling unit (JADU) will be constructed on the first floor of the proposed two-story dwelling unit. The review of the ADU and JADU is not part of this application review and action. Based on State law, ADUs are reviewed and approved ministerially and not subject to design review. The proposed ADU and JADU comply with Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations found in BMC Chapter 25.48.030 and all other applicable regulations.

ANALYSIS

The project meets the applicable development standards for single-unit dwellings based on the R-1 zoning district, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Project Information

	PROPOSED	ALLOWED/REQ'D
Front Setback (1st flr): (2nd flr):	21'-0" 31'-0"	21'-0" (block average) 20'-0"
Side Setback (left): (right):	10'-0" 4'-6"	4'-0" 4'-0"
Rear Setback (1st flr): (2nd flr):	42'-0" 50'-6"	15'-0" 20'-0"
Detached Garage (Side): (Rear):	1'-6" 1'-6"	1'-6" 1'-6"
Lot Coverage:	1,990 SF 28%	2,800 SF 40%
FAR:	3,548 SF 0.51 FAR	3,634 SF ¹ 0.52 FAR
Off-Street Parking:	1 covered in garage (13'-0" x 20'-0") 1 uncovered on driveway (10'-0" x 18'-0")	1 covered (10'-0" x 18'-0") 1 uncovered (9'-0" x 18'-0")
Building Height:	26'-8"	30'-0"
Plate Height (1st flr): (2nd flr):	9'-0" 8'-0"	9'-6" 8'-6"
Declining Height Envelope:	complies	C.S. 25.10.055.A.2.a

¹ (0.32 x 7,001 SF) + 1100 SF + 294 SF = 3,634 SF maximum allowed (0.52 FAR)

Urban Reforestation and Tree Protection Ordinance

The site contains eleven non-protected size trees which are proposed to be removed. Based on Urban Reforestation and Tree Protection Ordinance requirements, three landscape trees are required on-site. As part of this project, two new 24-inch box Crape Myrtle trees and one new 24-inch box Swan Hill Olive tree are proposed. Therefore, the project complies with the Urban Reforestation and Tree Protection Ordinance requirements. A plant schedule for proposed trees and plantings can be found on sheet L-1 of the proposed plans. There is one existing street tree along the parcel frontage that will remain. Tree protection measures are called out on the landscape plan.

Design Review

The proposed project design has been reviewed for consistency with the Residential Design Guidelines, R-1 zoning district development standards, and design criteria for Major Design Review for single-unit dwellings established in BMC Section 25.68.050, which requires:

1. Consistency with any applicable design guidelines;
2. Compatibility of the architectural style with that of the existing character of the neighborhood;
3. Respect for the parking and garage patterns in the neighborhood;
4. Architectural style and consistency and mass and bulk of structures, including accessory structures;
5. Interface of the proposed structure with the structures on adjacent properties;
6. Landscaping and its proportion to mass and bulk of structural components; and
7. In the case of an addition, compatibility with the architectural style and character of the existing structure as remodeled.

The architectural style of the proposed dwelling is derived from the Modern Farmhouse style by utilizing board and batten as the primary facade material, standing seam metal roofing, and rectangular windows with divided lites. The design also incorporates some Craftsman style influences including prominent gabled roofs, wood outriggers, and a covered front porch. The Craftsman architectural style is found within the existing neighborhood in addition to a variety of other architectural styles such as Spanish and Tudor Revival, contributing to the diverse residential context.

The massing of the proposed single-unit dwelling is articulated with varied roof forms and recessed wall planes which reduce the mass and bulk of the structure. The proposed detached garage is consistent with many of the surrounding existing dwellings which also have detached garages. The proposed dwelling complies with the block average for the front setback so that the dwelling aligns with adjacent dwellings.

The proposed exterior materials include:

- **Windows:** Vinyl clad wood windows with wood sills and simulated true divided lites with muntins on the exterior and interior of the window space and bars between the glass; wood trim below the windows
- **Doors:** Wood and glass panels with simulated true divided lites with mutins on the exterior and interior of the window space and bars between the glass
- **Siding:** Board and batten and wood siding
- **Roof:** Standing seam metal
- **Other:** roof awnings with metal support brackets, wood columns, wood outriggers, steel railing for rear deck, and stucco chimney

Design Suggestions

While the proposed massing, bulk, and roof form are consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and comply with the applicable design guidelines and standards, staff recommends revising the proposed color palette. The high-contrast combination of a white façade with a black standing seam metal roof and black window/door muntins is incongruous with the surrounding dwellings. Staff recommends changing the façade color, including the corbels and front porch column, to a color other than white, and selecting colors other than black for the roof and window trim. These changes would better emphasize the home's Craftsman influences and complement the architectural character of the neighborhood. Examples of

alternative earth-tone color palettes commonly used on Craftsman and similar architectural styles are provided below, as staff believes they would soften the façade and better integrate the home into its surrounding context.



A draft condition regarding the color palette has been included below for consideration, should the Planning Commission agree with staff's recommendation:

That the project revise the proposed color palette to be reviewed and approved by the Planning Division prior to building permit submittal. The revised color palette should utilize earth tones and include an alternate color to black for the roof and window/door muntins, and either a contrasting wall or trim color so that both elements are not the same color.

Overall, Staff finds that the project's architectural style, mass and bulk, and design is consistent with the City's Residential Design Guidelines and development standards.

Environmental Review

The project is Categorically Exempt from review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), per Section 15303 (a) of the CEQA Guidelines, which states that construction of a limited number of new, small facilities or structures, including one single-unit dwelling, or a second dwelling unit in a residential zone, is exempt from environmental review. In urbanized areas, this exemption may be applied to the construction or conversion of up to three (3) single-unit dwelling as part of a project.

Attachments:

Area Map
Resolution
Proposed Plans dated June 23, 2026
Renderings